

MATARUAHOU RESERVE

THEMES & CONCEPTS

The design process



What we heard from you...

The design process for Mataruahou is to be informed by kōrero with Mana Ahuriri and hapū representatives, drawing on cultural narratives, ecological priorities, and technical considerations. It seeks to balance ecology, cultural identity, recreation, education, and water security through a co-design approach. Engagement emphasised Te Mana o Te Wai, kaitiakitanga, and the creation of a space that supports healing, learning, and long-term sustainability.

Narrative Context

- **Cultural Significance:** Mataruahou, meaning “mirror images of faces”, recalls the story of a rangatira who saw his reflection in a spring-fed pool. The site is deeply connected to hapū identity, history, and occupation long before the establishment of the hospital.
- **Healing and Wellbeing:** Historically recognised as a place of refuge, supported by natural springs and rongoā species such as kawakawa and mokimoki fern. The site is associated with peace, harmony, and restorative values.
- **Water Narrative:** Springs once at the summit (now capped) symbolise the life-sustaining and cyclical nature of wai. The reservoir site is directly tied to Te Mana o Te Wai – ensuring fresh water for the community while honouring ancestral connections to wai.
- **Landscape and Waterscape Connections:** Mataruahou is linked to Te Whanganui-ā-Ōrotu (the estuary), surrounding pā sites, and other peaks. This reflects the interconnected cultural and ecological systems stretching mai i uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea).

Strategies...

Healing and Restoration: Rongoā plants, known as rongoā rākau, are native New Zealand flora used in traditional Māori healing. The practice of rongoā is a holistic system that includes herbal remedies, physical therapies like massage, and spiritual healing.

Water Management: The process of planning, developing, distributing, and overseeing the optimal use of water resources. It involves balancing the competing needs of recreation, and ecosystems while addressing concerns of water quantity and quality.



Mamaku



Kawakawa



Horopito



Koromiko



Manuka



Mokimoki



Spring water



Drip irrigation



Water harvesting



Permeable surface



Permeable surface



Planted swale

Strategies...

Education and Storytelling: A powerful tool that enhances understanding, engagement, and memory by embedding learning within a narrative structure, making abstract concepts relatable, fostering critical thinking, emotional connection, and imagination in all ages.

Design & Layout: A space that encourages reflection, wellbeing, and connection through features such as viewing platforms, educational areas, places for therapy and quiet contemplation. A safe and welcoming public space is essential, ensuring the site can be enjoyed by all.



Directional



Information



Behavioural



Historical



**Cultural artwork
& sculpture**



Braille



Reflection



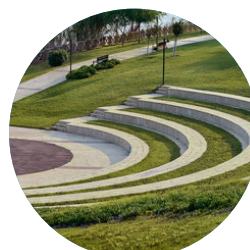
Private spaces



Communicating



Karakia/meditation



Education



Viewing platform

Strategies...

Sustainability: Guided by the principle of kaitiakitanga, the design should enhance biodiversity, restore ngahere, and embrace water-sensitive approaches that work in harmony with natural processes. It should promote low-maintenance, self-sustaining systems.

Community Engagement: The design should support reflection, wellbeing, and connection through spaces for contemplation, education, therapy, teaching, and karakia. It must be safe, inclusive, and welcoming, encouraging the community to use, shape, and care for it.



Ngahere



Shade



Water



Birds



Soil



Safety



Accessible



Community rongoā



Shared space



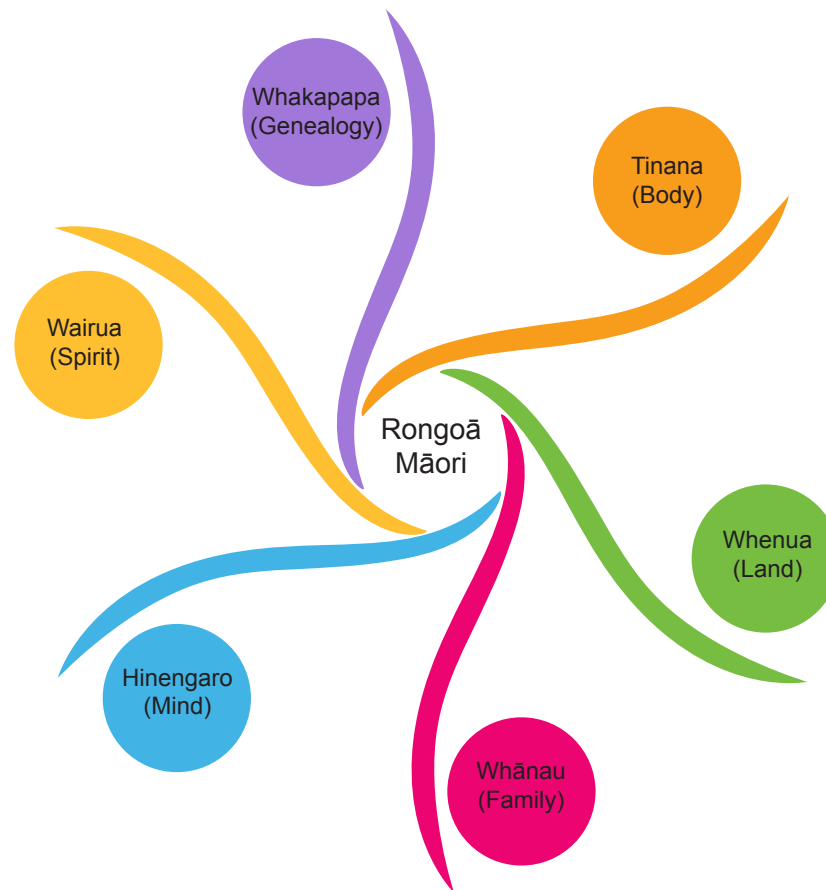
Sense of place



Community classes

Rongoā Māori

Rongoā Māori is the traditional healing system of Aotearoa New Zealand, encompassing herbal remedies, physical therapies, and spiritual practices, all grounded in a holistic view of health and wellbeing. Central to Rongoā Māori is the spiritual dimension and a deep connection with the natural environment, with knowledge passed orally through generations. Key practices include rongoā rākau (herbal medicine), mirimiri and romiromi (bodywork therapies), and whitiwhiti kōrero (supportive talking therapies).



Landscape Response:

The design is to integrate native plantings with traditional healing properties, provide quiet and reflective spaces for spiritual and physical practices, and creates opportunities for intergenerational learning. These responses embed cultural healing traditions within the landscape and strengthen community connection to whenua.

Rongoā Māori



Romiromi

Romiromi is a traditional Māori bodywork practice that combines deep tissue massage, pressure point stimulation, and body alignment to release blocked energy. It works across the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of a person, sometimes incorporating tools such as rākau (wooden sticks) and kōhatu (stones).

Mirimiri

Mirimiri is a traditional Māori healing practice that involves gentle massage, touch, and energy work to restore balance and promote wellbeing. Unlike Romiromi, which can involve deep tissue pressure, Mirimiri focuses on light, nurturing techniques that release tension and encourage relaxation at both physical and spiritual levels.

Rongoā Rākau

Rongoā Rākau refers specifically to the use of native plants for traditional herbal medicine. Knowledge of plant properties, preparation, and application has been passed through generations, supporting healing of the body, mind, and spirit.

Wai

Water (wai) is a fundamental element in rongoā, the traditional healing system, possessing profound spiritual significance. It is revered as a life-giving force and a medium for spiritual cleansing, with its health directly linked to the well-being of the people. The spiritual aspects of water are considered essential for restoring balance (mauri) in a person's physical, mental, and spiritual health.



- **Healing & Energy:** Water is widely used for spiritual cleansing and removing tapu to return a person to a state of noa (ordinary or everyday). Rituals like purepure involve immersing oneself in the sea or rivers to release old emotional experiences.

- **Connection to the Spiritual World:** Water bodies are often considered home to spiritual beings that act as guardians of the people. These water spirits help maintain the customs and mana.

- **Spiritual cleansing:** Healers use water in rituals to restore balance in a person's spiritual, mental, and emotional dimensions.

- **Bathing practices:** The therapeutic and spiritual power of water is harnessed through bathing.

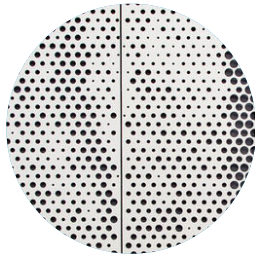
- **Connection to the land:** The health of the water flowing through the whenua is connected to the health of the individual.

The landscape response could provide quiet and reflective spaces for spiritual and physical practices, embedding cultural healing traditions within the landscape and strengthen community connection to whenua.

Outcome options...

The landscape options are grounded in natural materials and cultural symbolism that reflect cycles of life and connections to whenua. Kōhatu (stones) express permanence, strength, and grounding, while rākau (wood/wooden elements) embody warmth, growth, and continuity. Circular forms are incorporated throughout, inspired by the traditional presence of mokimoki (fragrant fern) to symbolise unity, balance, and the interconnectedness of people and nature. Native planting immerse visitors in the rhythms of the environment, with water introduced as a source of karakia cleansing, reflection, and renewal.

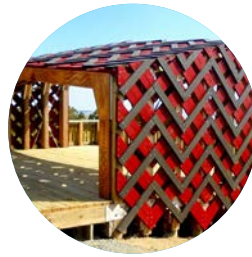
Tank treatments



Native planting



Viewing platform



Shared access



Private spaces



Reflective water



Outcome options...

Education area



Security stairs



Stone



Meditation



Music



Wai



A circular logo with a dark blue background. In the center, there is a silhouette of a tree with orange and yellow foliage, reflecting in a body of water. The reflection is perfectly symmetrical. In the bottom right corner of the circle, there are three small, dark grey dots arranged vertically.



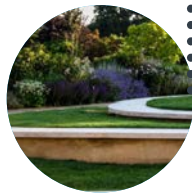
Diagram illustrating the layout of a water treatment facility, showing various reservoirs, chambers, and piping systems. The diagram is divided into sections by dashed lines, and specific areas are highlighted with numbered circles (1-13) and colored dots (yellow, orange, blue, green).

Key features labeled in the diagram include:

- RESERVOIR 3: REINFORCED CONCRETE, INTERNAL DIAMETER=40.5m, RESERVOIR RADIUS=20.25m, RESERVOIR HEIGHT=9.15m
- RESERVOIR 4: REINFORCED CONCRETE, INTERNAL DIAMETER=40.5m, RESERVOIR RADIUS=20.25m, RESERVOIR HEIGHT=9.15m
- RESERVOIR 5: REINFORCED CONCRETE, INTERNAL DIAMETER=40.5m, RESERVOIR RADIUS=20.25m, RESERVOIR HEIGHT=9.15m
- VALVE CHAMBER
- PUMP STATION
- SCOUR PIPE ENDS/PIES
- WATERWAY

The diagram is titled "Outward views" and includes a small inset image of a stone structure.

Outward views



- 1 Entry - Waharoa / wayfinding
- 2 Touchstone / Water cleansing
- 3 Pump station cladding to mirror tank treatment
- 4 Permeable shared access
- 5 Raised education space / future tank
- 6 Native planting / address retaining wall
- 7 Circular seating areas
- 8 Reflective pool
- 9 Platform
- 10 Native planting
- 11 Community rongoā gardens
- 12 Stones for tīraha
- 13 Water running through site